

# A new locality and habitat type for Rondônia Bushbird *Clytoctantes atrogularis*

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Rondônia Bushbird *Clytoctantes atrogularis* is an extremely poorly known Amazonian Brazil endemic. Described as recently as 1990, from a female specimen and field observations of two males at Cachoeira Nazaré on the west bank of the rio Ji-Paraná, Rondônia (Lanyon *et al.* 1990), *C. atrogularis* has since been recorded at five other sites (Fig. 1): Alta Floresta, Mato Grosso (Zimmer *et al.* 1997), the rio Sucunduri, Amazonas (Whitney 2005), Jaru Biological Reserve, Rondônia (D. R. C. Buzzetti *in litt.* 2006), Pousada Rio Roosevelt, Amazonas (Whittaker 2009) and Igarapés do Juruena State Park, Mato Grosso (Oliveira *et al.* 2009).

*C. atrogularis* is very similar to Black Bushbird *Neoctantes niger*. Both possess an upward-curved mandible, which character is unique among Thamnophilidae (Zimmer & Isler 2004, Ridgely & Tudor 2009). While *C. atrogularis* is not considered threatened at national level (IBAMA 2003), globally it is listed as Vulnerable (BirdLife International 2012), primarily due to habitat loss.

On 24 August 2012 we mist-netted a female *C. atrogularis* (Fig. 2) in *campinarana* on the Miratinga transmission line (09°21'31.2"S, 64°39'06.3"W) immediately south of the BR-364 highway, Nova Mutum / Jaci-Paraná, just over 100 km south-west of Porto Velho, the

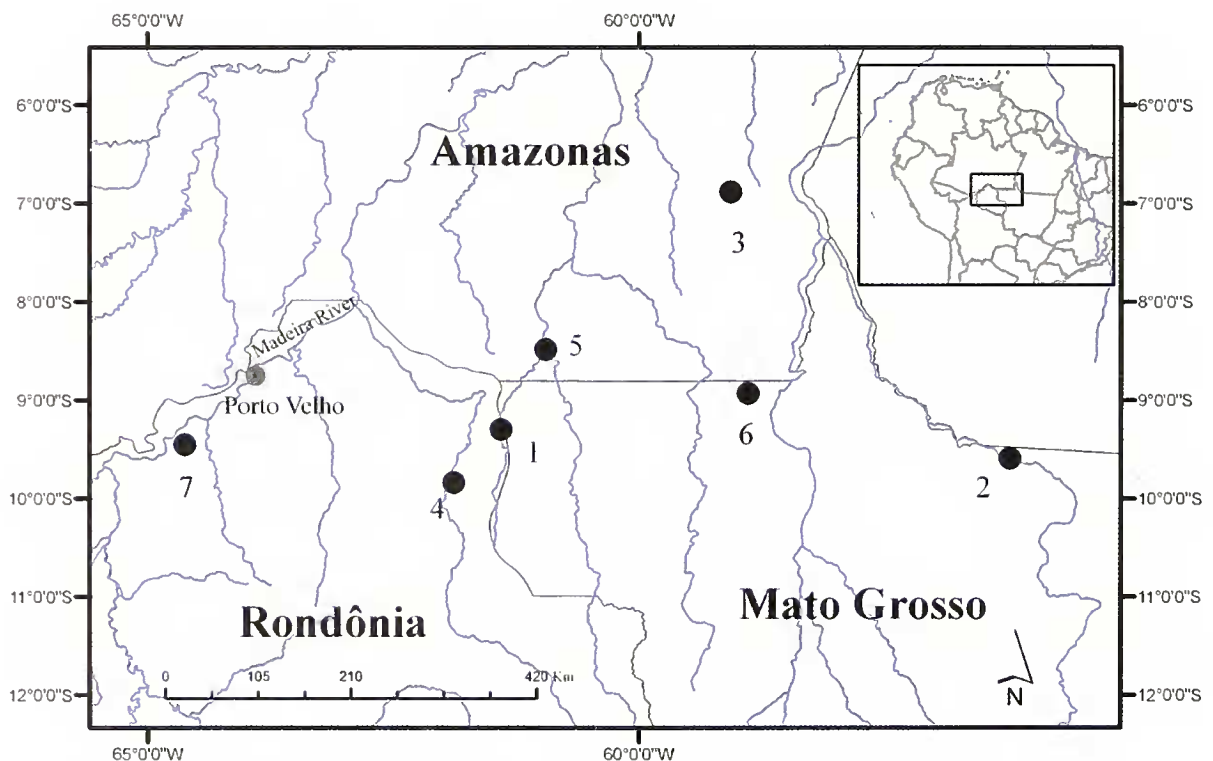


Figure 1. Known distribution of Rondônia Bushbird *Clytoctantes atrogularis*. Sites numbered in chronological order in which records were made. 1: Cachoeira Nazaré, Rondônia (type locality); 2: Alta Floresta, Mato Grosso; 3: rio Sucunduri, Amazonas; 4: Jaru Biological Reserve, Rondônia; 5: Pousada Rio Roosevelt, Amazonas; 6: Igarapés do Juruena State Park, Mato Grosso; and 7: *campinarana* at Miratinga, Nova Mutum / Jaci-Paraná, Rondônia.



Figure 2. Female Rondônia Bushbird *Clytoctantes atrogularis*, captured in *campinarana*, Nova Mutum / Jaci-Paraná, Rondônia, 24 August 2012 (Edson Guilherme)

capital of Rondônia (Fig. 1). The bird was foraging at the edge of a patch of low *campinarana* when it was trapped. It was weighed (33 g), photographed (Fig. 2) and then collected for subsequent analysis. Dissection revealed the presence of granulated ovaries (3 × 3 mm), 100% ossified skull, and fragments of arthropod exoskeletons were found in the gizzard. A tissue sample was taken for subsequent molecular analysis. The specimen (AC 473) has been deposited at the Ornithological Laboratory of the Federal University of Acre.

Rondônia Bushbird has not previously been recorded in *campinarana* habitat. In the Brazilian Amazon, *campinarana* is a unique vegetation type growing on white-sand soils (Anderson 1981). It is characterised by a relatively low canopy, with high densities of trees of reduced stature and girth, and no emergents or lianas (Anderson 1981, Fine *et al.* 2010). The *campinarana* in Nova Mutum / Jaci-Paraná is dense and low (canopy 2–5 m high) with abundant grassy patches (Fig. 3) and *Astrocaryum acaule* and *Mauritiella armata* palms, forming an enclave surrounded by fragments of *terra firme* forest and pasture. This *campinarana* was visited three times since 2010: on 2 June 2010 (60 mist-net hours), 26 February–2 March 2011 (439 net hours) and 20–24 August (400 net hours). Surveys used a combination of mist-netting and observation with binoculars. Vocalisations of some species were recorded, although playback was not employed. Despite the sampling effort, just one *C. atrogularis* was found. The lack of records may relate to the species' rarity (it appears to occur at low densities throughout most of its range) or indicate that the bird we recorded was a transient.

Our record extends the species' range c.300 km west from the nearest locality, Jaru Biological Reserve (Fig. 1). Almost all of the previous records of *C. atrogularis* were in *terra firme* forest with vines and second growth (Lanyon *et al.* 1990, Whitney 2005, Whittaker 2009), and no association with *campinarana* habitats had been reported. The species' presence in this vegetation type has important implications for our knowledge of its



Figure 3 (above). General view of the *campinarana* in the study area (Edson Guilherme)

Figure 4 (right). Patch of *campinarana* vegetation traversed by power lines adjacent to the BR-364 highway which links Porto Velho (Rondônia) and Rio Branco (Acre) in western Brazil (Edson Guilherme)



distribution within the Amazon basin as a whole. *Campinarana* are sparsely distributed and support many habitat-specific bird species (Borges 2004, Polleto & Aleixo 2005, Guilherme & Borges 2011). Such avifaunal elements are also patchily distributed and relatively sparse within the basin (Borges 2004, Whittaker 2004, Zimmer & Isler 2004, Polleto & Aleixo 2005, Ridgely & Tudor 2009, Guilherme & Borges 2011, Guilherme & Lemes 2011). The recent record of *Neotantes niger* (MPEG 74508) by EG *et al.* in *campinarana* in south-west Amazonia and now *C. atrogularis* in the same vegetation in Rondônia reinforce the idea that these two closely related species (Whitney 2005) are associated with white-sand habitats in this region of Amazonia at least.

## Conservation

The area in which our record of *C. atrogularis* was made is poorly conserved. Two power lines traverse the *campinarana* we surveyed (Fig. 4) and the area has also been impacted by sand quarrying. In addition, some of the *campinas* / *campinaranas* along the BR-364 highway between Jaci-Paraná and Abunã, where *C. atrogularis* might also be found, will be flooded by hydroelectric dams under construction on the rio Madeira (Jirau and Santo Antônio), although the *campinarana* studied here will not be affected. We recommend this area become a conservation unit to prevent its complete destruction. In addition to *C. atrogularis*, this *campinarana* (and others in the same region) support the rare Buff-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher *Poecilatriccus senex* (Whittaker 2004, Guilherme & Marques 2011), as well as Black Manakin *Xenopipo atronitens*, Pale-bellied Mourner *Rhytipterna immunda*, Fuscous Flycatcher *Cnemotriccus fuscatus duidae* and Green-tailed Goldenthrout *Polytmus theresiae* (Whittaker 2004, Guilherme & Marques 2011), all of which are associated with white-sand vegetation in the Amazonian lowlands.



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